



# Obama Meets With New King of Saudi Arabia

President Barack Obama meets new Saudi Arabian King Salman bin Abdul Aziz in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. The president and first lady have come to express their condolences on the death of the late Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

(AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

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## Obama meets with new King of Saudi Arabia



President Barack Obama and Saudi Arabian King Salman bin Abdul Aziz stand during the arrival ceremony in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. The president came to express his condolences on the death of the late Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud.

(AP Photo/ (AP Photo/SPA)

M. R. GORDON  
P. BAKER

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RIYADH, Saudi Arabia - President Barack Obama met with King Salman of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, leading a bipartisan delegation of prominent current and former officials to shore up an important relationship and offer condolences for the death of King Abdullah.

U.S. officials said the meetings were the first official discussions the new monarch has held with a visiting foreign dignitary.

Air Force One landed on a clear, mild afternoon with a brisk wind snapping the American and Saudi flags to attention. At the Erga Palace, the king and the president sat in gold chairs as their meeting got under way.

Obama was in Riyadh for only a few hours, detouring from the return leg of a three-day visit to India. Still, the fact that he made the stop was significant,

because he rarely travels overseas to mark the death of a foreign leader; more often, he dispatches the vice president, secretary of state or other dignitaries to represent the United States. U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia were strained by Obama's decision not to mount military strikes in Syria against the government of President Bashar Assad over the use of chemical weapons. Saudi Arabia has been a bitter foe of Assad, who has repressed the Sunni Muslim majority in Syria and who has the backing of Iran, the Saudis' regional rival.

The Saudis are also uneasy about the Obama administration's pursuit of a nuclear deal with Iran, fearing that it will do too little to restrain the Iranians from developing nuclear weapons. And they were unhappy with U.S. policy toward the Arab Spring uprisings, especially in Egypt, where they accused the United States of

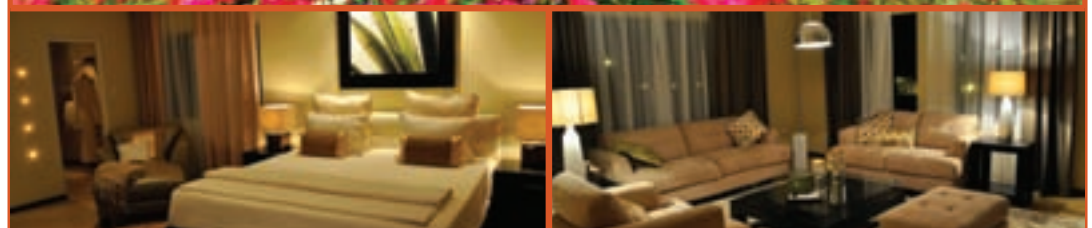
turning its back on a friend, President Hosni Mubarak.

Still, the Obama administration has worked assiduously to try to repair relations with the Saudis. After a pivotal June meeting in Jidda between Secretary of State

John Kerry and King Abdullah, Saudi Arabia agreed to join the United States in carrying out airstrikes against Islamic State fighters in Syria and Iraq.

Joining the president for the visit on Tuesday were his

Republican opponent from 2008, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, and several veterans of Republican administrations, including two former secretaries of state, James A. Baker III and Condoleezza Rice. □

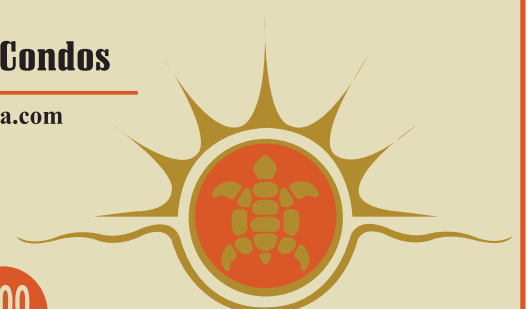


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## Blizzard slams New England, spares most of Mid-Atlantic

**BOB SALSBERG**  
**DENISE LAVOIE**  
**Associated Press**

**BOSTON (AP)** - Its winds howling at more than 70 mph, the Blizzard of 2015 slammed Boston and surrounding parts of New England on Tuesday with none of the mercy it unexpectedly showed New York City, piling up more than 2 feet of snow.

The storm punched out a 40-to-50-foot section of a seawall in Marshfield, Massachusetts, badly damaging a vacant home. In Newport, Rhode Island, it toppled a 110-foot replica of a Revolutionary War sailing vessel in drydock, breaking its mast and puncturing its hull. The blizzard's force and relentlessness stunned even winter-hardened New Englanders.

"It's a wicked storm," Jeff Russell said as he fought a mounting snowdrift threatening to cover a window



**A police officer questions the driver an occupant of a car that ended up on top of a tall snowbank in the middle of Commercial Street during a blizzard, Tuesday, Jan 27, 2015, in Portland, Maine. Although there is no driving ban in Maine, most motorists stayed off the roads on Tuesday. The storm is expected to dump up to two feet of snow.**

at his home in Scarborough, Maine. The snow in New England began Monday evening, continued all day Tuesday

and was not expected to ease until late evening. And the bitter cold could hang on: The low in Boston on Wednesday is expected

(AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty)

to be 1 degree, and forecasters said it will not get above freezing for the next week or so.

The Philadelphia-to-Boston corridor of more than 35 million people had braced for a paralyzing blast Monday evening and into Tuesday after forecasters warned of a storm of potentially historic proportions.

The weather lived up to its billing in New England and on New York's Long Island, which also got clobbered. But in the New York City area, the snowfall wasn't all that bad, falling short of a foot. By Tuesday morning, buses and subways were starting to run again, and driving bans there and in New Jersey had been lifted.

The glancing blow left forecasters apologizing and politicians defending their near-total shutdown on travel. Some commuters grumbled, but others sounded a better-safethan-sorry note and even

expressed sympathy for the weatherman.

"I think it's like the situation with Ebola: If you over-cover, people are ready and prepared, rather than not giving it the attention it needs," said Brandon Bhan, a New York City security guard.

National Weather Service director Louis Uccellini said his agency should have done a better job of communicating the uncertainty in its forecast. But he also said the storm may in fact prove to be one of the biggest ever in some parts of Massachusetts.

Around New England, snowplows struggled to keep up, and Boston police drove several dozen doctors and nurses to work at hospitals. Snow blanketed Boston Common, where the Redcoats drilled during the Revolution, and drifts piled up against Faneuil Hall, where Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty stoked the fires of rebellion.

Nearly 21 inches of snow coated Boston's Logan Airport by evening, while nearby Framingham had 2½ feet and Worcester 26 inches, according to unofficial totals. Lunenburg, Massachusetts, reported 33 inches.

Providence, Rhode Island, had well over a foot of snow. Sixteen inches had piled up in Portland, Maine, and 23 inches in Waterford, Connecticut. Montauk, on the eastern end of Long Island, got about 2 feet.

"It feels like a hurricane with snow," said Maureen Keller, who works at an oceanfront resort in Montauk.

At least 30,000 homes and businesses were without power in the Boston-Cape Cod area, including the entire island of Nantucket. □

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## Obama floats possible drilling lease in Atlantic



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chair Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, voices her opposition after President Barack Obama waded into a decades-long fight over drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, announcing that his administration would pursue a wilderness designation for 12.28 million acres, barring drilling in most of the refuge, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

DINA CAPIELLO

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Obama administration floated a plan Tuesday that for the first time would open up a broad swath of the Atlantic Ocean to drilling, even as it moved to restrict drilling indefinitely in environmentally-sensitive areas of the state of Alaska. The proposal envisions auctioning areas located more than 50 miles (80 kilometers) off the coasts of Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia to oil companies no earlier than 2021, long after President Barack Obama leaves office. For decades, oil companies have been barred from drilling in the Atlantic Ocean, where a moratorium was in place up until 2008.

The plan also calls for leasing 10 areas in the Gulf of Mexico, long the epicenter of U.S. offshore oil production, and three off the Alaska coast.

"This is a balanced proposal that would make available nearly 80 percent of the undiscovered technically recoverable resources, while protecting areas that are simply too special to develop," Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said in a conference call with reporters. "The areas off the table are very small in comparison to areas on

the table."

The plan, which covers potential lease sales in the 2017-2022 time frame, drew immediate reaction from Capitol Hill, where Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican, called it a war on her home state, and where Northeastern Democrats objected to the proposal for the Atlantic Ocean. The proposal comes as the U.S. is in the midst of an oil boom and when oil prices, and pump prices, are at near-historic lows.

"Opening up the Atlantic coast to drill for fossil fuel is unnecessary, poses a serious threat to coastal communities throughout the region, and is the wrong approach to energy development in this country," said New Jersey Sens. Cory Booker and Robert Menendez, and Rep. Frank Pallone, in a statement. Interior Department officials cautioned that they were in the early stages of a multi-year process, with Jewell saying they were only "considering" a lease sale in the Atlantic and that areas could be "narrowed or taken out entirely in the future."

For Alaska, President Barack Obama issued a memorandum Tuesday placing 9.8 million acres (4 million hectares) of the state's offshore resources off limits indefinitely. The

memorandum withdraws from leasing parts of the Beaufort and Chukchi seas, as well as a shallow 30-mile (50 kilometer) shelf in northwestern Alaska called Hanna Shoal, citing their importance to Alaska natives and the sensitive environmental resources.

"There are some places that are too special to drill, and these areas certainly fit that bill," Jewell said.

Obama in early 2010 announced his intention to allow drilling 50 miles (80 kilometers) off the Virginia coast, only to scrap it after the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. But the administration has allowed oil and gas companies to explore for oil and gas in the Atlantic in the meantime, which is the initial step prior to drilling. □

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## US consumer confidence jumps to 7 1/2-year high in January

**PAUL WISEMAN**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. consumers welcomed the new year with a surge in confidence.

The Conference Board reported Tuesday that its consumer confidence index climbed this month to 102.9, highest level since August 2007 — four months before the start of the Great Recession. January's figure was up from a revised 93.1 in December.

"Consumers started the year in a buoyant mood," Andrew Hunter, an analyst at Capital Economics, wrote in a research note.

Americans haven't felt this good about current economic conditions since January 2008. And they are the most optimistic they've been since February 2011 about business conditions over the next six months.

The Conference Board also found that 20.5 percent



**Customers shop at Nordstrom Rack in Schaumburg, Ill. The Conference Board released the Consumer Confidence Index for January on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. (AP Photo/Nam Y. Huh)**

of consumers surveyed described jobs as "plentiful" — the biggest share in nearly seven years. The fig-

ure had dropped as low as 3.1 percent in November and December 2009.

Consumer confidence has

been rising as the economy improves. Employers added nearly 3 million jobs last year, most since 1999.

The unemployment rate last month tumbled to a 6-year low of 5.6 percent.

The economy grew from July through September at a 5 percent annual rate, fastest in 11 years.

Adding to improving spirits: Gas prices have plunged to \$2.04 a gallon Tuesday from \$2.32 a gallon a month ago, according to AAA. Lower gasoline prices leave more money in consumers' wallets to spend on other things.

Bricklin Dwyer, an economist at BNP Paribas, wrote in a research note that the stronger consumer confidence numbers "support our forecast for continued strength in consumer spending." Absent from the economic success story so far are significant wage gains: Adjusted for inflation, hourly earnings for private-sector employees were the same last month as they'd been in December 2008. □

## Jobless-rate moves: Colorado best, Louisiana worst

**C. S. RUGABER**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Colorado's unemployment rate fell by a third. Louisiana's jumped nearly a quarter.

Across the country, changes in unemployment rates varied from state to state in 2014, but collectively the numbers pointed to a year of substantial improvement: Jobless rates fell in 46 states, and every one except Mississippi added jobs.

Even Louisiana's gain masked some good news: The state added a healthy number of jobs — just not enough to keep up with population growth.

The broad improvement shown in Tuesday's report from the Labor Department reflected a pickup in hiring across the country. Employers nationwide added nearly 3 million jobs last year, the most since 1999. The gains were driven by solid economic growth in spring and summer. During 2014, the national unemployment rate sank to 5.6 percent from 6.7 percent.

In Colorado, which enjoyed the biggest proportional drop in unemployment, healthy hiring lowered its rate to 4 percent from 6.2 percent. Colorado's employers added

62,300 jobs, boosting its payrolls 2.6 percent, the nation's 10th best job gain. The largest increase was in the low-paying sector of restaurant, hotels and entertainment firms, such as amusement parks, which added 15,300 jobs. In addition, the higher-paying industries of education and health care added 14,000 jobs, construction companies 10,000.

Other states with sizable drops in unemployment rates last year were: Idaho, whose rate fell to 3.7 percent from 5.6 percent; Ohio, where it fell to 4.8 percent from 7.1 percent; and Illinois, where it dropped to

6.2 percent from 8.9 percent.

Rates rose in only two states last year. The largest was in Louisiana, whose rate jumped to 6.7 percent from 5.4 percent. But that jump occurred because more people moved into the state and didn't find work, not because companies weren't hiring. Louisiana added 29,000 jobs, a 1.5 percent increase. But the number of unemployed people rose to 146,000 from 112,500.

The only other state to report a rising higher unemployment rate last year was North Dakota, but the increase was trifling. It

moved up just 0.1 percentage point to 2.8 percent. North Dakota, which has benefited from an oil and gas drilling boom, still has the nation's lowest rate.

Its energy boom contributed to a gain of 24,500 jobs last year, a 5.4 percent increase — the largest percentage increase in the nation. Yet North Dakota's population also rose a bit, contributing to the tiny rise in its jobless rate.

Unemployment rates were unchanged in two states last year: Vermont and West Virginia.

In December, rates fell in 42 states, rose in four and were unchanged in four. □





## US Financial Front:

# American new home sales jump 11.6% in December

**JOSH BOAK**  
AP Economics Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Sales of new U.S. homes accelerated strongly in December, a sign that home-buying may improve this year after a lackluster 2014.

The Commerce Department said Tuesday that new home sales climbed 11.6 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 481,000. The gains were not enough to offset essentially flat home-buying over the course of 2014. Just 435,000 new homes were bought last year, a modest 1.2 percent improvement from 2013.

The growth in December pointed to rising sales in 2015, buoyed by the combination of strong hiring in recent months and drastically lower mortgage rates. Home values are also rising at a slower pace, improving affordability for would-be buyers.

"We may see continued momentum in new home sales kick off 2015," said

Derek Lindsey, an analyst at the bank BNP Paribas.

Over the past 12 months, median prices for new homes rose 8.2 percent to \$298,100. That increase masks the gains on the lower-end of the new construction market. The share of new-homes priced \$200,000 to \$299,999 increased in December to 32 percent, up from 30 percent in the prior two months.

"This is where the first-timers are likely found, so it is encouraging that they appeared to be enticed into the new home market," noted Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets.

Last year disappointed in part because builders largely focused on higher-end houses, which limited the number of would-be buyers and kept the pace of construction below historic levels. Roughly 700,000 new homes were sold in the 1990s, nearly a third more than in 2014.

Much of the gains in December came from a 53.6 percent jump in sales in the Northeast and a 17.7 percent increase in the South. The West reported a slight increase in sales, while buying in the Midwest slipped. The improved health of the U.S. economy should help

ers to borrow, helping them afford larger and more expensive homes. So far, homeowners are primarily relying on the lower rates to refinance their mortgages. Purchases are up 3 percent over the past 12 months, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.



**A flag flaps in the breeze in front of a new home for sale in Richmond, Va. The Commerce Department reported on sales of new homes for December on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015.**

(AP Photo/Steve Helber)

boost sales in the coming months.

Average rates for 30-year mortgages dropped to 3.63 percent last week, down from 4.39 percent a year ago, according to the mortgage firm Freddie Mac. That steep decline makes it cheaper for buy-

At the same time, the growth in prices for existing homes has been steadily slowing, putting more properties within reach of buyers who had previously been priced out of the market. The Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller 20-city home price index, released

Tuesday, rose 4.3 percent in November from 12 months earlier. That's down slightly from a 4.5 percent pace in October and double-digit gains in early 2014.

Would-be buyers are likely to moderate any price growth caused by increased demand, even if the figures may be bumpy from month-to-month, said Hela Richardson, chief economist at the real estate brokerage Redfin.

"We're seeing that the hottest demand is at the most affordable price points," Richardson said. "That means if prices go up too far too fast, buyers will step back and wait for them to drop again."

Solid hiring over the past year should help contribute to income gains and real estate sales. The unemployment rate has plunged to 5.6 percent from 6.7 percent a year ago, as employers added nearly three million jobs last year, according to the Labor Department. □



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## Dark Deals:

# A US green-energy blueprint, meant to help Liberia, fails

**RONNIE GREENE**  
**JONATHAN LAYLEH**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON/BUCHANAN, Liberia (AP)** — On paper, the pitch was simple: A green energy company backed by \$217 million in U.S. government loans would convert one of Africa's poorest countries into the world's first bio-mass-driven economy. But the plan to help Liberia collapsed amid questionable business decisions and oversight. The company, Buchanan Renewables, dismissed 600 workers and left the country amid complaints of workplace injuries, environmental harm and, at times, sexual abuse.

Backing the company at every stage was the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a federal agency with a global mandate but low profile. The agency approves more than \$3 billion a year in financing, targeting developments in hard-pressed communities. But its internal watchdog has issued reports on just five deals since 2005, a period when OPIC approved more than 530 projects. From the start, an investigation by The Associated Press found, OPIC's support for the power project in the western African country of Liberia was marked by questionable scrutiny and deep political links. Even

for ostensibly philanthropic projects meant to aid the world's poorest, corporate opportunities and profits can intersect with family and business ties among Washington's political elite. On the ground in Liberia, Buchanan Renewables' power projects. Over 22 months from 2006 to 2008, the agency paid Steele \$390,000 for consulting and an additional \$114,556 in travel expenses, the AP found. Then it approved three loans to support Buchanan's vision in Liberia.



The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) building is seen on New York Avenue NW in Washington. A failed U.S. government-backed plan to produce environmentally friendly energy in one of Africa's poorest countries was marred by insider connections and questionable planning, an Associated Press investigation found. The federal agency at the center of the deal is one of the government's biggest secrets and routinely escapes public scrutiny. That agency, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, approved three loans totaling \$217 million to help a company, Buchanan Renewables, convert nonproducing rubber trees into biomass chips that would help power Liberia.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

CEO was James Steele, a larger-than-life former U.S. military figure and onetime Texas business partner of OPIC's then-president and CEO, Robert Mosbacher Jr. Mosbacher's father was Commerce secretary under President George H.W. Bush. Steele drew acclaim, and controversy, over his role in U.S. military efforts, from the Iran-Contra affair to Iraq, where he performed work for President George W. Bush's defense secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld. Even before the Liberian project, Mosbacher had tapped Steele as a consultant to help OPIC develop

The venture collapsed amid tensions between the company and the Liberian government, questions from the U.S. Embassy and the withdrawal of a vital financier. Troubling stories emerged: charcoal producers having to trade sex for wood promised as part of the undertaking, Buchanan's machinery cracking open an ancestor's grave on one family farm, the company leaving piles of woodchips that attracted stinging ants and fouled local waters. Some women said they became pregnant after trading sex for wood sticks with Buchanan staff members in

Liberia. "If we didn't have sex with the employees they wouldn't give you sticks," Sarah Monopoloh, chairwoman of a local charcoal sellers union, told the AP. She said she suffered a painful miscarriage. "I nearly died in the process," Monopoloh said. Tree planter Aderlyn Barnard was knocked unconscious, breaking a leg and wrist and dislocating an arm, when the company's clearing machine felled her with a tree. "I am one of the victims," she said. "Right now I am disabled." To Mosbacher, who abstained from OPIC's loan vote, the project was an opportunity lost. Steele declined an interview request. "This was absolutely for the best of intentions and that's why it was literally the biggest disappointment I had from all my time at OPIC," said Mosbacher, the agency head from 2005 to 2009. "What seemed to be a home run, a win-win, just didn't work out the way any of us had hoped."

In all, OPIC handed out \$77 million of the \$217 million in loans it approved for the Liberian project, money the company said would allow it to convert aged rubber trees into biomass chips that would fuel power plants. The last loan came under the agency's current president and CEO, Elizabeth Littlefield. When OPIC approved the final \$90 million loan in 2011, it did not conduct an onsite environmental and social due diligence visit for a project in a country haunted by a decade-long civil war and history of abuses against women.

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## Secret talks in Jordan try to win release of hostages



A woman along with other protesters hold a placard and chant "Free Goto" during a rally outside the prime minister's official residence in Tokyo, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. A Japanese envoy in Jordan expressed hope that both a Japanese hostage and a Jordanian pilot held by Islamic militants will return home "with a smile on their faces," as criticisms mounted Tuesday over the government's handling of the crisis.

(AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

**ZEINA KARAM**  
**YURI KAGEYAMA**  
**Associated Press**

**BEIRUT (AP)** — Secret talks were underway Tuesday in Jordan in the presence of a Japanese envoy to secure the freedom of a Japanese journalist and a Jordanian pilot captured by Islamic State extremists and purportedly threatened with death within 24 hours.

The global efforts to free Japanese freelance journalist Kenji Goto and Jordanian Lt. Mu'ath al-Kaseasbeh gained greater urgency with the release of the apparent ultimatum from the Islamic State group.

In the message, the extremists say the two hostages will be killed within 24 hours unless Jordan frees Sajida al-Rishawi, an Iraqi woman sentenced to death in Jordan for her involvement in a 2005 terrorist attack on a hotel that killed 60 people. The pilot's father, Safi al-Kaseasbeh, made a last-ditch appeal for Jordan "to meet the demands" of the

Islamic State group.

"All people must know, from the head of the regime to everybody else, that the safety of Mu'ath means the stability of Jordan, and the death of Mu'ath means chaos in Jordan," he told The Associated Press.

About 200 relatives of the pilot demonstrated outside the prime minister's office in the Jordanian capital of Amman, chanting anti-government slogans and urging it to meet the captors' demands.

A member of Jordan's parliament said the country was in indirect talks with the militants to secure the hostages' release. Bassam Al-Manasseer, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, told Bloomberg News the negotiations are taking place through religious and tribal leaders in Iraq, adding that Jordan and Japan won't negotiate directly with IS and won't free al-Rishawi in exchange for Goto only.

Manasseer's comments were the strongest sugges-

tion yet that authorities in Jordan and Japan may be open to a prisoner exchange, something that would go against the policy of the kingdom's main ally, the U.S., which opposes negotiating with extremists. Japan's Deputy Foreign Minister Yasuhide Nakayama was in Amman to coordinate hostage-release efforts with Jordan.

The hostage saga involving the two Japanese nation-

als has stunned Japan and triggered criticism of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe over his government's handling of the crisis.

The militants have reportedly beheaded one Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa, and have threatened to kill Goto — along with al-Kaseasbeh — setting a Wednesday afternoon deadline.

The video matched a message released over the

weekend, though neither bore the logo of the Islamic State group's al-Furqan media arm. The weekend video showed a still photo of Goto holding what appears to be a photo of Yukawa's body.

The AP could not independently verify either video. However, several militant websites affiliated with the Islamic State group referenced the latest video and posted links to it Tuesday. □



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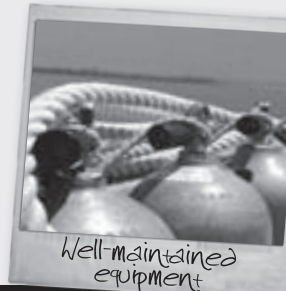


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## Leader of Yemen's rebels urges 'peaceful transfer of power'

**AHMED AL-HAJ  
BRIAN ROHAN  
Associated Press**

**SANAA, Yemen (AP)** — The leader of Shiite rebels who control the Yemeni capital called for a "peaceful transfer of power" on Tuesday, after his forces released a presidential aide whose abduction set in motion a violent escalation that led to the resignation of the president and the government.

The escalation has plunged Yemen deeper into turmoil and pushed it closer to fracturing along sectarian and tribal lines. The prospect of a leaderless nation has also raised concerns about Washington's ability to continue targeting Yemen's local al-Qaida branch, which it considers the network's most dangerous.

The Houthis overran the capital, Sanaa, in September, after descending from their northern stronghold and demanding a greater share of power. The release of the aide could signal rebels' readiness for de-escalation, given that President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi had made it a top demand. Abdel-Malek al-Houthi blamed political forces and southerners



Protesters hold a poster depicting Yemen's President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, left, and Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, a leader of Shiite rebels who hold the capital, Sanaa, amid a power vacuum, during a demonstration in Sanaa. The leader of Shiite rebels who control the Yemeni capital called for a "peaceful transfer of power" on Tuesday, after his forces released a presidential aide whose abduction set in motion a violent escalation that led to the resignation of the president and the government.

for Yemen's chaos despite what many see as a power grab by his Shiite Houthis, who abducted the aide 10 days ago. He called for a meeting to be held to work toward resolving political and security issues while also pledging to take a stand against "anarchists." "I extend an invitation to all free and honorable people across the spectrum — ac-

ademics, tribes, elders, all people — to a large, inclusive, broad, exceptional, and historic meeting Friday in Sanaa," al-Houthi said in a speech on the rebels' Masirah TV. His speech was met with calls by activists and social groups for protests in Sanaa and across the country however. The Socialist Party called on al-Houthi to release Hadi and

(AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)

his government minister from house arrest, and free detained demonstrators as a sign of good faith. Yemeni activist Hisham Al-Omeisy was skeptical about the chances al-Houthi's meeting would produce results, saying that a similar call he made last year led to a meeting packed with Houthi supporters and few dissenting voices.

"Now that he actually has power there's little point for him to listen to other people," Al-Omeisy said.

A representative of the rebels told The Associated Press that the Houthis freed the aide, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, and handed him over to local tribes in the southern province of Shabwa. An official with the president's office confirmed the release. Both the Houthi representative and the official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

The rebels abducted bin Mubarak to protest Hadi's decision to proceed with a draft constitution that would divide Yemen into six federal states — something the rebels strongly oppose. As street battles engulfed Sanaa and shelling rocked the city for days, Houthis seized control of more state institutions, including the presidential palace, military camps and state media. They also encircled Hadi's residence and that of Prime Minister Khaled Bahah. A tentative deal under which Hadi agreed to some political concessions later collapsed and the president, the premier and the entire Cabinet resigned.

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## Holocaust survivors gather at Auschwitz-Birkenau to remember



**Mordechai Ronen** a holocaust survivor from the US, center, gestures while praying with fellow survivors upon arriving at the Auschwitz Nazi death camp in Oswiecim, Poland, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015.

(AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski)

### JOANNA BERENDT

© 2015 New York Times

OSWIECIM, Poland - More than 3,000 guests, including Holocaust survivors and foreign dignitaries, gathered Tuesday at a site marking one of history's biggest horrors, the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps in southern Poland, which were liberated by Soviet troops 70 years ago in closing months of World War II.

Because of advancing age, this year's ceremony at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum may be the last major anniversary to include more than a handful of survivors of the Nazi death camps here, where about 1.5 million people lost their lives, most of them European Jews. Some 1,500 survivors attended the 60th anniversary in 2005, but Tuesday there were fewer than 300 on hand. Most are in their 90s, and some are older than 100.

Their dwindling numbers prompted many at the ceremony to raise the question of how best to sustain their memory when they are gone, and what it means in a time of fresh outbreaks of religious and ethnic ani-

mosities.

"Today, in the name of truth, we need to fight the attempts to relativize the Shoah," President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland said as he opened the ceremony Tuesday afternoon, using another term for the Holocaust. "The memory of Auschwitz means the memory of the importance of freedom, justice, tolerance and respect for human rights," he added.

Dozens of heads of state and other prominent figures took part in the ceremony, including the presidents of France, Germany and Austria, François Hollande, Joachim Gauck and Heinz Fischer; the kings of Belgium and the Netherlands, Philippe and Willem-Alexander; and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew will represent the United States, while Russia was represented by Sergei Ivanov, President Vladimir Putin's chief of staff.

The anniversary takes place at a time when reports of anti-Semitism are increasing across Europe. One Jewish organization said in a recent report that the incidence of anti-Semitic

acts in France had doubled over the past year.

"Jews are targeted in Europe once again because they are Jews," Ronald S. Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress and a major contributor to the preservation of the museum complex, said at the ceremony.

Lauder, 70, said the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, including at a kosher supermarket, had prompted him to radically change the remarks he intended to deliver. He called on the world leaders in the audience to adopt policies of zero toler-

ance toward hatred of any kind. "Unless this is checked right now, it will be too late," he said.

Steven Spielberg, whose Holocaust film "Schindler's List" won seven Academy Awards, raised a similar warning in a short speech on the eve of the anniversary, saying that Jews were once again threatened by "the perennial demons of intolerance."

Speaking at a Shoah memorial in Paris before flying to Poland for the ceremony at the museum, Hollande pleaded with Jews in his country not to react by

emigrating. "The place of Jews is in France," he said.

"France is your homeland." He called on Internet service providers to take action against anti-Semitic comments posted online.

Gauck also gave a speech at home before traveling to Poland. He told a commemorative session of the German parliament that "while the Holocaust will not necessarily be among the central components of German identity for everyone in our country, it will still hold true that there is no German identity without Auschwitz."

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## Fidel Castro breaks silence over thaw in US-Cuba relations

**VICTORIA BURNETT**  
© 2015 New York Times

**MEXICO CITY** - Fidel Castro has ended his silence of almost six weeks over the deal to restore diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, writing in a letter that he supported a peaceful end to conflict but still distrusted U.S. politics.

"We will always defend co-operation and friendship with all of the world's people, among them, our political adversaries," Castro wrote in the letter. It was read to students to observe the 70th anniversary of his matriculation at the University of Havana, and it was published late Monday in Granma, the Communist Party's official newspaper.

The conspicuous absence of Castro after the announcement on Dec. 17 of the détente after decades of tension and diplomatic estrangement prompted rumors in Havana and Miami that he was dead. Those were largely calmed by a letter two weeks ago from Cas-



**A photograph of Fidel Castro hangs under the Spanish word "Welcome" on the wall at a state-run food market in Havana, Cuba. On Monday, Jan. 26, 2015, after more than a month of silence, Castro made his first public comments about the news that the U.S. and his island nation will restore diplomatic relations after more than 50 years of hostility.**

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

tro, 88, to the Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona. But the letter to Maradona did not mention the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States, leaving analysts to wonder

whether Castro, who stared down nearly a dozen U.S. presidents during the long standoff between the two nations, approved of the deal. Castro, who handed the reins of power to his

brother Raúl because of serious illness - first in 2006, then officially in 2008 - has made only sporadic appearances over the last few years and has not been seen in public in a year.

In the letter published Monday, Castro was wide-ranging, skipping from global economic inequality and Greek notions of utopia to Cuba's role in the Angolan conflict before addressing the reconciliation of Cuba and the United States.

"I shall explain my essential position in a few words," he wrote. "I do not trust the politics of the United States, nor have I exchanged a word with them, but this is not, in any way, a rejection of a peaceful solution to conflicts."

His brother, he wrote, had "taken the relevant steps in line with the prerogatives and authorities awarded to him by the National Assembly and the Cuban Communist Party."

Brian Latell, a former analyst with the CIA who has tracked the Castros for decades, noted that the letter did not mention three Cuban spies who had been imprisoned in the United States and were returned to the island as part of the negotiations.

Fidel Castro had campaigned years for the return of the spies, originally part of a group of five, turning them into a cause célèbre in left-leaning circles abroad.

"He made it such a principle, but he hasn't reacted to that and he hasn't seen them," said Latell, referring to the spies. He added, "Why hasn't he taken some credit?"

The letter, whose authorship cannot be verified, seemed to serve Raúl Castro's political purposes more than Fidel's, Latell said, adding, "You have to wonder who is composing these utterances." □

## Venezuelan officials reject drug trafficking report

**CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)** — Venezuelan officials on Tuesday denounced a report that links the head of the socialist South American country's congress to the drug trade.

Two Spanish-language newspapers reported Monday that the chief bodyguard of National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello has gone to the United States with information implicating him as head of a drug cartel made up of political and

military officials.

The anonymously sourced stories were carried by ABC of Spain and the Miami-based El Nuevo Herald. In Washington, William Brownfield, the State Department's top anti-narcotics official, said there is significant evidence that some members of the Venezuelan government have been corrupted by trafficking organizations and said the report naming bodyguard Leamsy Salazar "is not inconsistent with that

narrative. That is as far as I am inclined to go."

He said he was neither confirming nor denying the report.

Loyalist Venezuelan Congressman Pedro Carreno took to Twitter to accuse the CIA of buying off Salazar. Cabello also responded on Twitter, thanking people for their support at a time of "infamy and intrigue." "Every attack against me strengthens my spirit and resolve," he said. The top-trending Twitter

topic in hyper-polarized Venezuela Tuesday afternoon was "total support for Diosdado," followed by "Diosdado drug trafficker." The U.S. has long accused top Venezuelan political and military leaders of complicity in the drug trade. In July, former Venezuelan military intelligence chief Hugo Carvajal was arrested in Aruba on a U.S. warrant. Venezuela was ultimately able to use diplomatic wrangling to have him set free. □





## Champions Introduces Its New Look and Feel to the Local Press



**PALM BEACH** - Recently, the Aruba Marriott team invited the local media to experience Champions Sports Bar & Restaurant's new look and feel.

Upon arrival the press members enjoyed a peach mojito as welcome drink and enjoyed the scrumptious Champions Sampler with sliders, onion rings, chicken wings and loaded fries as appetizer. For entrée they picked their favorite dish from the newly revamped menu and enjoyed live entertainment by Ernesto and Angela.

The restaurant's new interior design now offers a modern and light new ambience with 33 high definition flat screens throughout the venue, a hip L-shaped bar and an updated menu. In addition, the Champions' logo has also been revamped to fit the freshly updated look and feel.

Champions' now offers an Executive Happy Hour every Friday from 6:00pm to 8:00pm with \$5 premium bar and live entertainment. For those looking for the ideal venue for a special occasion, Champions' offers a private area perfect for any event such as kids birthday parties. Stay tuned for Champions' Express Lunch to be introduced in March and will

offer a fixed lunch menu at a special price for professionals to enjoy.

Champions Sports Bar &

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## Kiwanis International Celebrates 100 Years of Service!

**ORANJESTAD** - On January 21, 2015, Kiwanis International celebrated 100 years of service! Kiwanis International was founded in 1915 exactly 100 years ago in Detroit, Michigan. In 2005 during their 90th Anniversary Convention, Kiwanis International adopted the theme "Serving the Children of the World," rededicating Kiwanis International to making an impact on the lives of children all around the world. In their 100 years, Ki-



wanis International has expanded to 96 countries around the world, with almost 8,400 clubs in place, and more than 600,000 members. There are many more clubs that share the

same mission and vision of Kiwanis International, and form a larger family, such as K- Kids, Key Club, Aktion Club, Builders Club, Kiwanis Junior and Circle K. Kiwanis Circle K of the University of Aruba con-

gratulates the Kiwanis International for its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and hopes Kiwanis International continues to have an impact on the lives of people all over the world, especially the Kiwanis Clubs of Aruba! □



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## Sidebar changes Aruba's restaurant scene with its flavorful gourmet burgers

**ORANJESTAD** - Take a burger of one hundred percent prime Angus beef, add to that the freshest possible extras and tastiest sauces and voila: here is your gourmet burger. Sidebar, a newly opened, great restaurant in the Renaissance Marketplace in downtown Oranjestad, knows how to tease your taste buds with the best burgers imaginable.

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Sidebar's signature burgers have been named The Sidebar, The Afterburner, The Goliath, The Texan, The Chaser, The Primal and The Italian Job and we are sure that everyone will be able to find a burger that calls out to them. The burgers come with brie cheese, prosciutto, Cheddar cheese, zucchini, sliced steak, Bourbon bbq sauce, dripping gravy and much more, depending on your order. The best thing is that these gourmet beauties cost less than \$ 15.--, so lunch or an evening out won't break the bank.

Feel love for Sidebar's burgers; they are bursting with taste— try them all and find your personal favorite. Come on down to Sidebar and rock your Wildest West with a fabulously tasty burger that packs a punch with its layers of flavor. And if you are not in a burger mood, then Sidebar has a wonderfully varied menu of all kinds of other options, ranging from vegetarian mushrooms and spinach to a zucchini cutlet to lovely salads, homemade soups, pastas and fish dishes.

Wash your lunch or dinner down with a premium, aged Bourbon or try the ice-cold beers on tap to slake your thirst. You can choose between Heineken, Balashi, Chill, Stella Artois, Miller Light or Presidente. Come inside, at the bar or sit outside on the terrace; at Sidebar there will always be a place for you.



Picture: "THE TEXAN" GOURMET BURGER

**Chosen by readers of USA TODAY and 10Best:**

**Vote for Aruba's Baby Beach in the 10Best Readers' Choice Awards!**

**SAN NICOLAS** - As you might have seen online, Aruba's very own Baby Beach is one of the top nominees in the latest "10Best Readers' Choice" travel award contest. This week is your last chance to vote for your favorite and help get Aruba to #1! The current leaders on "10Best Reader's Choice Awards" in their "Best Caribbean Beach" poll are:

1. Horseshoe Bay Beach – Bermuda.
2. Crane Beach – Barbados.
3. Baby Beach – Aruba.

Let's move Baby Beach on Aruba to the top of the list by rocking the vote at <http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-caribbean-beach/>. Voting is open until Monday, February 2nd, 2015 at 11:59am EST. ☐



A half-moon stretch of sand along a serene lagoon, Baby Beach is one of Aruba's best. The crystalline waters remain shallow quite far out, making it an ideal location for swimming (especially for families with young children), and snorkelers can swim out to where the lagoon opens into the sea to view colorful fish and corals in a designated snorkeling area.

(Photo courtesy of Aruba Tourism Authority)





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## Maria Onni's Creative Explosion: Vibrant Caribbean Colors Make Sidebar Bistro's Giant Wall Shimmer and Shine

**ORANJESTAD** - A mural, covering some 50 square meters inside Sidebar restaurant, is something you shouldn't miss: it is an explosion of the colors of the Caribbean, depicting a magic garden filled with flowers, birds, a totem pole and funny, alien-looking, beer-drinking, hamburger-eating male elves. The colors ochre, pink, turquoise, bright green and orange 'happify' the wall of the restaurant: an unbeatable combination when you savor its fantastic gourmet hamburgers, tasty salads, ice cold beers and aged bourbons. Don't drive past Sidebar Bistro, but park your car on the Renaissance Marketplace parking downtown and come inside to enjoy Maria's mural and to pamper your other senses as well.

Painter Maria Onni (33) was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina; she came to Aruba on the wings of love



when she was just 20 years old. After her divorce, she started selling her original artwork and she was over the moon when Sidebar owner Niels Stooter asked her to paint a mural for his new restaurant. "He gave me carte blanche," Maria tells with a big smile. "I had a blueprint of what he wanted, made by his architect Arjen Coster from Holland, but I needed a free hand to be able to explore my creativity for this huge project."

It took Maria and her team three weeks to finish the mural. She started with a background of orange with yellow lights and she outlined the basic main figures like the flowers, the birds, the centipede and the elf-figurines. Sometimes her friend and fellow artist Mariana Luna came to help; at other times she directed five people. Maria worked on the mural during late afternoons and early evenings when the workmen were gone,

closely watched by Niels. After it was finished, Niels told Maria that he had taken a big chance with this project, but that he was very happy with the result. The mural incorporates several aspects of life on Aruba: there is the central totem pole with the shoko, the island's cute, endemic owl. "I used a totem pole to indicate the link with Aruba's indian history and spiritual side. Then there are fantasy flowers in various colors, a trupial, our orange-breasted blackbird, an iguana and a toy-like centipede," explains Maria. Lots of bottles, one of them Angels Envy, a superb bourbon that you can get here, are depicted on the wall as well as the funny elf-like, alien little man that is eating a hamburger, guzzling a Balashi beer and climbing a cactus to reach a bottle. Are you curious and do you want to see if for your-



self? No problem; go to Sidebar Bistro, have breakfast, lunch, drinks or dinner there and let Maria's Caribbean mural lift your mood sky-high. It's definitely worth your visit! Sidebar Bistro is open daily from 8am till midnight and on Friday and Saturdays they stay open till 1am. Sidebar is located at Renaissance Marketplace across from Ocean Suites downtown Oranjestad. □





# RAF'd UP

## Nadal loses to Berdych in Australian Open quarterfinals

Rafael Nadal of Spain leaves the Rod Laver Arena after his quarterfinal loss to Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic in their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015.

Associated Press  
Page 18

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## Nadal's Australian Open goes true to his prediction



Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic celebrates after defeating Rafael Nadal of Spain in their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015.

Associated Press

**DENNIS PASSA**  
**AP Sports Writer**  
**MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)** — Rafael Nadal kept telling anyone who would listen that his fitness levels wouldn't stand up to the rigors of a two-week Grand Slam tournament. Tomas Berdych proved him right. Nadal, who had played only eight matches since last June coming into the Australian Open because of a right wrist injury and appendix surgery in early November, was knocked out in the quarterfinals 6-2, 6-0, 7-6 (5) on Tuesday by Berdych — who had lost

17 straight matches to the Spaniard.

"It is obvious that I needed something more to be more competitive," Nadal, a 14-time major winner, said. "As I said when I arrived here, the process always is not easy. When you have injuries, comebacks are difficult. But without being at my top level of tennis, I was able to be here in quarterfinals. Is not a bad result at all for me." Berdych, while thankful for the win, was reminded of a quote from the late Vitas Gerulaitis after beating Jimmy Connors for the first time in 16 matches: "Nobody beats Vitas Gerulaitis 17 times in a row."

So no one, not even Nadal, could beat Berdych 18 times in a row?

"I've heard that one already," Berdych said, smiling.

The other men's semifinalists will be determined on Wednesday when top-seeded Novak Djokovic plays Milos Raonic and defending champion Stan Wawrinka takes on U.S. Open runner-up Kei Nishikori.

Berdych will play sixth-seeded Andy Murray in the semis after the British player beat local hope Nick Kyrgios 6-3, 7-6 (5), 6-3. Kyrgios came back from two sets down and saved a match point in the fourth round Sunday before beating Italian Andreas Seppi, the player who eliminated Roger Federer in the third round, but there was no such comeback on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old Kyrgios, who walked onto the court with his headphones on and gave two thumbs-up to the crowd, was at his crowd-pleasing best. After hitting a backhand drop shot at the net for winner in

the second set, he spread out his arms for applause, and in the third set, he hit a between-the-legs shot that Murray easily returned.

"It was a tricky match," Murray said. "I tried to start as quick as possible because I know how dangerous Nick is. He's a huge hitter of the ball, so I tried to keep it out of his strike zone as much as possible. Thankfully it worked."

Kyrgios, who beat Nadal in the fourth round at Wimbledon last year, likes Murray's chances now that both Nadal and Federer are out of the Scotsman's half of the draw.

"I said to him at the net, 'This is your time, go for it.' I think he's got a really good chance of winning the whole thing," Kyrgios said.

On the women's side, Maria Sharapova moved closer to another Australian Open title, defeating 20-year-old Eugenie Bouchard 6-3, 6-2. The Russian made all the big points look easy and advanced to play Ekaterina Makarova, who earlier beat third-seeded Simona Halep 6-4, 6-0.

"I felt pretty good from the start, didn't feel I had too many letdowns," Sharapova said, adding that her close call in the second round — facing two match points against a qualifier — sharpened her focus for the rest of the tournament. The last time Sharapova and Bouchard met — in the semifinals at the French Open last year — Bouchard won the first set before Sharapova came back to take the next two. The Russian then won the title at Roland Garros.

This time, Bouchard, who made the finals of Wimbledon and two other Grand Slam semis last year. □

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## Davis' dunks aplenty lead Pelicans past 76ers, 99-74

**The Associated Press**

**NEW ORLEANS (AP)** — Anthony Davis had 32 points, 10 rebounds and four blocked shots as the New Orleans Pelicans stretched their season-long winning streak to four games with a 99-74 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday. Ryan Anderson scored 19 points and Eric Gordon added 13 for New Orleans, while Tyreke Evans tied a season high — set one night earlier — with 12 assists.

K.J. McDaniels scored 16 points for the 76ers, who lost their sixth straight. Henry Sims and Luc Mbah a Moute had 14 points.

Philadelphia played without Michael Carter-Williams, who was sidelined by an upper respiratory infection. Davis was 12-of-19 shooting, including five layups and five crowd-pleasing dunks, and made all eight of his free throws as New Orleans (24-21) went three games above .500 for the first time since coach Monty Williams' first season in 2010-11.

**THUNDER 92, TIMBERWOLVES 84**

**OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)** — Russell Westbrook scored 18 points as Oklahoma City got the win while playing without the injured Kevin Durant.

Durant sat out after spraining the big toe on his left foot Sunday against Cleveland. Westbrook shot just 7 for 22 from the field, but was 4 for 6 and scored 11 points in the fourth quarter to help the Thunder remain in control. Serge Ibaka added 13 points and a season-high 19 rebounds.

Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points, Thaddeus Young

had 22 and Gorgui Dieng had a season-high 18 rebounds for the league-worst Timberwolves, who shot a season-low 34.1 percent from the field.

Anthony Morrow and Reggie Jackson each had 14 points to help Oklahoma City's reserves outscore Minnesota's 45-21.

**CLIPPERS 102, NUGGETS 98**  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Jamal Crawford scored 21 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter as the Los Angeles Clippers held off the Denver Nuggets for their fifth straight victory.

Crawford scored their final five points and had a key save that led to a basket in the closing seconds, when the Clippers completed their biggest comeback of the season after being down by 16 earlier in the game.

Matt Barnes added 18 points for Los Angeles, and Blake Griffin had 14 points, nine rebounds and 10 assists. Chris Paul scored 15 points. Ty Lawson led the Nuggets with 19 points and 11 assists. **GRIZZLIES 103, MAGIC 94**

**MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP)** — Zach Randolph had 24 points, 10 rebounds and six assists in Memphis' third straight win, and Marc Gasol added 16 points and 10 boards.

Beno Udrih added 15 points and Jeff Green finished with 12 for the Grizzlies.

Orlando, which dropped its sixth in a row, got 18 points and 12 rebounds from Nikola Vucevic. Victor Oladipo also had 18 points and Elfrid Payton had 12 points and six assists, but shot 5 of 14 from the field. Dewayne Dedmon had 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Memphis led by as many as 20 and held a double-digit advantage through much of the game.

**CELTICS 99, JAZZ 90**

**SALT LAKE CITY (AP)** — Tayshaun Prince scored 19 points as Boston held on for the road win.

Tyler Zeller had 14 points and seven rebounds for the Celtics, who grabbed control with a big second quarter. Jared Sullinger had 12 points and nine rebounds, and Avery Bradley also scored 12.

Prince, who was acquired from Memphis in a three-team trade on Jan. 12, was 7 for 10 from the field and 3 for 4 at the free-throw line. □



New Orleans Pelicans forward Anthony Davis (23) slam dunks in front of Philadelphia 76ers center Henry Sims (35) and forward Robert Covington in the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. The Pelicans won 99-74. Associated Press

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Tiger Woods hits a tee shot on the ninth hole during a practice round for the Phoenix Open golf tournament on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Associated Press

## Tiger Woods tries to put focus back on golf

**DOUG FERGUSON**  
AP Golf Writer  
**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)** — Tiger Woods had a full set of teeth and was chomping at the bit to get his season started. In Phoenix, of all places, where he hasn't been in 14

years. That might be the best indication yet that the biggest news on the PGA Tour actually might occur on a golf course.

Consider the last week. Even as Jimmy Walker was rolling to a nine-shot victory in the Sony Open, the big story out of Honolulu was what happened to Robert Allenby that caused the bloody scrape on his forehead and the deep bruise in his swollen eye after a night out on the town. Allenby stood by his story Tuesday that he was beaten and robbed, even though he said he has no recollection of the 2½ hours from leaving a wine bar until he wound up in park with homeless people.

Two days later, Woods was photographed in Italy, where he went to support Lindsey Vonn as she captured a record 63rd World Cup race in skiing. This was Vonn's big day, and Woods said he was simply trying to blend in by wearing a skeleton-patterned mask across the lower part of his face. He might have pulled it off except when the mask came down one of the most famous athletes in the world was photographed with a missing tooth.

"It's a new world. We need to talk about something," Woods said of the attention it created. "Have to fill up space."

About the time he was getting his teeth fixed, Dustin Johnson filled up space in a Sports Illustrated story about his leave of absence from the PGA Tour for what he called personal challenges that required pro-

fessional help. This was the same news group that reported in August that Johnson had failed a third drug test — one for marijuana and two for cocaine — and he was suspended for six months.

The PGA Tour denied the report that he was suspended. Johnson said he would not return until his first child was born. A son, Tatum, was born last week. Johnson will return next week in Torrey Pines, his first competition in six months. What a coincidence.

So with all this going on, perhaps it was only fitting that an innocuous comment from Allenby on Tuesday generated the most laughs.

"I'm hitting the ball well," he said.

Golf? We're supposed to be interested in golf?

Even Allenby had to stifle his laughter at the timing of the question and his answer. It was reminiscent of the year former Masters chairman Hootie Johnson stood his ground against Martha Burk and her campaign for a female member. The second question in his press conference during a rainy week in Georgia was, "Is there any consideration to lift, clean and place for the tournament?"

Once the laughter from the absurdity of the question subsided, Johnson replied, "Well, now we know why we are here."





And that's where Woods comes in.


Not to let the boring details of golf get in the way, but he says he is ahead of schedule in each phase of his game with new swing consultant Chris Como.

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# AP source: Yanks thinking of not making \$6M payment to A-Rod

RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The New York Yankees are considering not making a \$6 million payment to Alex Rodriguez if he hits six home runs and ties Willie Mays at 660 for fourth place on the career list.

Rodriguez signed a \$275 million, 10-year contract with the team in December 2007 and a separate marketing agreement that called for \$6 million payments for up to five milestone accomplishments designated by the Yankees. Each payment is due within 15 days of designation and is in exchange for rights such as using Rodriguez's name and image in selling licensed goods.

At the time of the marketing agreement, those accomplishments were contemplated to be tying the home run totals of Mays, Babe Ruth (714), Hank Aaron (755) and Barry Bonds (762), and breaking Bonds' major league record.

Rodriguez returns to the team next month after a season-long drug suspension and has three seasons and \$61 million in guaranteed money remaining in his contract.

New York's thought process on the \$6 million payment, first reported by the Daily News, was described to The Associated Press on Monday by a person familiar with the deal who spoke on condition of anonymity because no public statements were authorized. The Yankees are thinking of letting any accomplishment pass without declaring it a milestone.

A failure to declare a milestone and make a payment likely would trigger a grievance on Rodriguez's behalf by the Major League Baseball Players Association. Barring a settlement, the case would be heard by an arbitrator.

Rodriguez's spokesman, Ron Berkowitz, declined comment. A-Rod met last week with Rob Manfred, who headed the investigation of the Biogenesis of the Americas clinic that led to the player's suspension for violation of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract.

Rodriguez's spokesman, Ron Berkowitz, declined comment.

A-Rod met last week with Rob Manfred, who headed the investigation of the Biogenesis of the Americas clinic that led to the player's suspension for violation of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract.

## Mental evaluation ordered for boxer Jermain Taylor

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AP)

— IBF middleweight champion Jermain Taylor must undergo a mental evaluation, an Arkansas judge said on Tuesday.

Pulaski County Circuit Judge Leon Johnson granted a request from Taylor's attorneys that he be moved to a state hospital for a full evaluation, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported.

He has pleaded not guilty to first-degree battery and first-degree terroristic threatening charges stemming from an August shooting of his cousin at his home in Maumelle. And Taylor last week was charged with aggravated assault and endangering the welfare of a minor after police said he opened fire and threatened to shoot a family during a Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade in Little Rock.

Prosecutors sought to have Taylor's bond revoked in the first case after last week's arrest, so he was arrested again pending Tuesday's hearing. Instead, the judge agreed to a request from Taylor's attorney, Hubert Alexander, to have him immediately enter a hospital for an evaluation. Afterward, Alexander said

it would likely include a full mental and health evaluation. "Everybody is saying this isn't the Jermain Taylor they know," Alexander said. "We're trying to figure out who in the heck it is."

Johnson also granted a request from prosecutors



This photo provided by the Pulaski County Sheriffs Office shows Jermain Taylor.

Associated Press

to have Taylor undergo a mental evaluation at a state hospital, which will include a neuropsychological evaluation. Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney John Johnson told the judge the state believes Taylor is a "danger to himself and other people."

Taylor is due back in court on Feb. 10, and results from the mental evaluation will be presented to the court on April 27.

Taylor won the IBF title in October, and has served as an unofficial ambassador for Arkansas since 2000, when he won a bronze medal at the Sydney Olympics. He is scheduled to defend his title against Sergio Mora on Feb. 6 at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi.



In this July 9, 2007, file photo, American League's Alex Rodriguez, right, of the New York Yankees, compares grips with National League's Barry Bonds, of the San Francisco Giants, during the All-Star Home Run Baseball Derby in San Francisco.

Associated Press

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# Whirling Rooms

By: Dr Carlos Viana

With my eyes closed my airplane instructor twists and turns the plane so that it is not flying level. This is a classic "unusual attitude" training every pilot needs to repeat to stay a safe pilot. I groan as I fight to keep from vomiting my breakfast. "OK, open your eyes and straighten the aircraft", orders my instructor. I open my eyes to find my instructor has covered my airplane instruments. Not good my instincts scream. Facing out to sea I cannot tell the difference between sky and ocean and my brain is telling me we are turning left.

The seconds tick off as I try to adjust the aircraft to what I feel is going on. "Now", I say implying that I think I have control of the airplane to my instructor as he uncovers my airplane instruments. As I look at my instruments. I am headed into the ground turning slowly in a classic flying problem, called the "graveyard spiral".

I have done this maneuver before and I know that in a spinning cockpit I have to trust my instruments even though my sense of balance, coming from my middle ear is telling me different. I line up the plane according to my instruments and start feeling a sensation of whirling or tilting that causes a loss of balance, a dizziness that puts my stomach wanting to give up breakfast. "Vertigo", I complain as my in-

structor intently watches to make sure I have regained composure of both the plane and myself.

Vertigo from Latin that means "whirling about" describes a medical condition in which somebody feels the sensation of dizziness with the room spinning. Dizziness is an indistinct term which describes a variety of conditions ranging from light-headedness, unsteadiness to vertigo and spans a large range of symptoms. These symptoms range from the most dramatic, vertigo, to the least severe, imbalance. Included in these feelings is fainting, which results in a loss of consciousness.

As a private pilot I know it is the sensory system located in the inner ear that helps the body to maintain balance. Balance in the human body is coordinated by the brainstem, which collects information from other parts of the brain and sensory organs throughout the body. The sensory organs that play critical roles relaying information to the brainstem include the skin, eyes, muscles and joints, and the vestibular system in the inner ear. Dizziness may result with dysfunction in any of these components or in the nerves that connect them.

French physician Prosper Mènière described Mènière's disease as having four particular symp-



toms: vertigo lasting for an hour or more, but less than 24 hours; ringing or buzzing sounds in the ear; feeling of pressure or fullness in the ear; and some hearing loss. Some people are affected in both ears; others just one ear. Onset of Mènière's is sometimes related to stress. Regular medicine usually looks for problems with the inner ear for dizzy symptoms. However, most people that we see have been dizzy for more than a couple of days.

As a Traditional Chinese Medical (TCM) physician I know the liver is involved in many problems with dizziness. The liver detoxifies our blood and an overworked liver produces a condition that we call "liver fire"; whose symptoms are dizziness, pain on the sides of the head at the temples, a sensation that you are choking, heart palpitations, and stomach upset. People with liver fire usually have a green hue around their mouths, wake up around 3:00am and get angry easily.

Lifestyle choices, including eating processed foods, taking pharmaceutical or other drugs, working or living with chemicals, bombardment of EMF's (electrometric fields) and

not getting enough exercise all contribute to our toxic overload, making it impossible for our livers to work efficiently.

Interestingly, historically this condition was known here in Aruba and was called "madder". TCM views a healthy Liver as "The General" who sends energy in the form of fluid to various parts of the body. If the General's "palace," the liver, is on fire, the chain of command is broken. Menstrual flow becomes heavy or "reckless" and menstrual problems; bladder and painful lower stomachs develop. Although, sexual desire drops, satisfying sexual activity is a great way to help "calm" the Liver. In our clinic we have found acupuncture treatments to be fantastic in improving a "hot" Liver, therefore helping dizzy symptoms. Milk Thistle, Astragalus root, Black Cohosh root, Don Quai Root, Red Clover and Rhodiola root as well as Evening Primrose Oil are beneficial herbs and oils for the liver. You improve liver function by slowing down alcohol consumption, exercising and eating natural food that is good for your metabolic type and prepare food that has not been fried, helps dramatically.

Get The Point! Modern life can affect our body's equilibrium, particularly because of the toxins we are exposed to every day in our air, water and food. Additionally, sedentary lifestyle, chemicals, medicines, electrometric fields from computers,

electrical transformers and cell phone towers all affect our balance. The right diet, acupuncture and herbs can help our body regain control of the spinning room. After you and you have explored possible infections of your inner ear, ruled out anemia, brain tumors, stroke, migraines, epilepsy, or multiple sclerosis, all which may result in feelings of dizziness; come in to have a TCM liver evaluation. Let us help you cool the fire in your body's palace and stop the whirling room.

CARLOS VIANA, Ph. D. is an Oriental Medical Doctor (O.M.D.) having studied in Shanghai, China; a Board Cert. Clinical Nutritionist (C.C.N.), a fellow member of the Board Certified Association of Addiction Professionals (C.Ad.), the Chairperson of the Latin American Committee of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), a Rejuvenating Cell Therapist and specializes in Anti-Aging Medicine, has a weekly radio program, writes and lectures extensively. For information: VIANA NATURAL HEALING CENTER NV, Kibaima 7, Aruba, TEL: 585-1270, Web Site: [www.vianaheal.com](http://www.vianaheal.com)

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## What! Facebook's down? No storm selfies during brief outage

YOUKYUNG LEE

BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writers

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) —

No storm selfies, hookups, status updates. With Facebook and Instagram down for nearly an hour overnight, what were legions of users to do?

Turn to Twitter, of course. To talk about Facebook. The hashtag "#facebook-down" generated a cascade of tweets, including an image of a T-shirt with the words "I survived #facebookdown." Companies such as Coca-Cola took it as a viral marketing opportunity.

Of course companies that depend on Facebook and Instagram to reach their

customers, like the dating app Tinder, had to wait. More than 7,500 websites had services affected by the Facebook outage, according to Web tracking firm DynaTrace.

For most, though, it was just a blip. While Facebook certainly has become an important communications tool for some 1.35 billion people worldwide, a temporary shutdown does not have the same crippling effect as the loss of electricity, water, the Internet or a city's public transit system. It's also a lesson, perhaps, in what happens when we rely heavily on a free service that, while very stable, cannot promise 100 percent uptime.



This April 9, 2012, file photo shows Instagram being demonstrated on an iPhone in New York.

Associated Press

## Microsoft tanks 10 percent, hit by 4 downgrades on earnings

BRANDON BAILEY

AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Microsoft shares plunged 10 percent Tuesday after the software giant reported quarterly revenue that beat expectations but warned that a weak PC market and a strong dollar will curb growth this year. Many analysts slashed price targets on the stock and some cut their Buy ratings to Hold.

What are Wall Street's main concerns?

WHAT'S AHEAD

Microsoft showed promising signs of growth in new businesses, such as cloud computing, but Chief Financial Officer Amy Hood forecast revenue for the current period that missed analysts' expectations. Revenue for the quarter ending in March will be \$21 billion if the company hits the midpoint of its own forecast. Analysts had forecast \$23.8 billion, on average.

"The cloud transition remains on track, but lower numbers means a lower price target," analyst Ross MacMillan of RBC Capital Markets wrote to clients.

XP UPGRADES ARE OVER

Last year Microsoft stopped supporting its Windows XP software. That drove many consumers and businesses



This July 3, 2014, file photo, shows the Microsoft Corp. logo outside the Microsoft Visitor Center in Redmond, Wash.

Associated Press

to upgrade their computers, giving a big boost to sales of newer Windows software. It seems that 'end-of-XP' jolt is over. Microsoft said Windows licensing revenue fell 13 percent in the December quarter, now that most businesses have finished replacing their old XP computers.

CHINA AND JAPAN MARKETS ARE WEAK

PC sales have been slumping worldwide, but Microsoft said Windows and Office revenue in China and Japan markets was particularly weak due to broader economic issues in those countries. That weakness is likely to continue this year, Evercore analyst Kirk Materne wrote in a report Tuesday.

STRONG DOLLAR

Microsoft said the strong dollar will trim revenue by

4 percent in the current quarter.

TRANSITION FAR FROM OVER

In less than a year, CEO Satya Nadella has made big strides in expanding Microsoft's focus from PCs to the growing variety of gadgets, including smartphones and tablets, that people use to go online. The quarter showed major gains in sales of cloud-computing software, Surface tablets and Lumia smartphones. But Tuesday's stock slump shows investors' honeymoon with Nadella may be over.

"He is a very skilled executive," Cowen analyst Gregg Moskowitz said of Nadella, in a note Tuesday. "Still, the big question remains whether Mr. Nadella can effect enough positive change over time." □

"Kind of like the snowstorm that was supposed to cripple New York City, this didn't have much of an impact on Facebook," said Debra Aho Williamson, an analyst with research firm eMarketer. "It was over quickly, it was easily fixed and life came back to normal fairly quickly."

It's possible that companies that rely on Facebook's login tool to let people access their sites and apps lost a "little bit of traffic" or a tiny bit of ad revenue, she said, but it's unlikely to have had a big effect given the brief nature of the outage.

"Life will go on, I think we'll all survive," Williamson said. At midday in Asia, users of PCs and Facebook's mobile app reported they lost access. Facebook and Instagram also were down simultaneously in the United States, Australia and the U.K. After Facebook was restored, some users reported that the site was loading slowly or not functioning fully. On its website for developers, Facebook said the "major outage" lasted one hour.

Facebook says an internal technical change affected its configuration systems and denied that it was hacked. Lizard Squad, a group notorious for attention-seeking antics online, had claimed responsibility on Twitter for the outages. Guillermo Lafuente, a security consultant at MWR In-

foSecurity, said a technical fault is more plausible than a hack. A denial-of-service attack would have made the sites unreachable rather than accessible with an error message displayed, he said. Facebook's use of multiple data centers also meant an attack on one would have affected one region; this outage was global.

Also, restoring service would be a matter of reversing the technical changes, which matched with the brevity of the outage, LaFuente said. The temporary loss of service may be Facebook's biggest outage since Sept. 24, 2010, when it was down for about 2.5 hours. Outages were more common in the site's early years, when its backup systems and data centers were not as robust as they are now. These days, the Menlo Park, California-based company routinely tests its infrastructure and sometimes even takes down part of it intentionally to check its resilience.

The outage came a day ahead of Facebook reporting its quarterly earnings. Lizard Squad on Monday claimed it had defaced the Malaysia Airlines website and would release data from the airline. Its previous hacking claims have been mostly aimed at gaming or media companies such as Sony's PlayStation network and Microsoft's Xbox. □



## 3M net income rises 7% as sales jump broadly

**ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)** — 3M's profit rose 7 percent in the fourth quarter and sales increased at all its business units, though revenue fell short of Wall Street expectations.

The company also reaffirmed its earnings outlook for the year, but shares edged lower in early Tuesday in a sharp sell-off on U.S. markets.

3M Co. makes consumer, medical and busi-

ness products, including Post-it notes, Scotch tape, industrial coatings and ceramics.

Sales at its safety and graphics unit rose 3.4 percent to \$1.4 billion. They rose 3.3 percent to \$1.4 billion at its electronics and energy business, 2.2 percent to \$1.1 billion at its consumer business, 1.4 percent to \$2.6 billion at its industrial business and 2.4 percent to \$1.4 billion at its

health care unit.

The St. Paul, Minnesota, company posted earnings of \$1.18 billion, or \$1.81 per share, in the three months ending Dec. 31, compared with \$1.1 billion, or \$1.62 per share, in the same period the year before.

Net income was 3 cents better than Wall Street was expecting, according to a poll by Zacks Investment Research.

Revenue rose 2 percent

to \$7.72 billion, below the \$7.78 billion analysts expected.

3M expects full-year earnings between \$8 and \$8.30 per share. Analysts expected earnings of \$8.21 per share, according to FactSet.

Shares of 3M slipped 76 cents to \$163.48 in trading just after the market opened Tuesday morning. Its shares are up about 27 percent from a year ago. □

## P&G fiscal 2Q earns drop 31% on exchange

**TOM MURPHY  
CANDICE CHOI**  
**AP Business Writers**

Procter & Gamble's second-quarter earnings sank 31 percent as the strong U.S. dollar cut into the performance of the world's largest consumer products maker.

The Cincinnati company, which sells products ranging from Tide detergent to Crest toothpaste, said Tuesday that exchange rates will remain a challenge well into fiscal 2015, especially in the second half of its year. Overall, it expects foreign exchange to chop its core, fiscal 2015 earnings by 12 percent and reduce its revenue by 5 percent.

The company's stock slid 3 percent after markets opened Tuesday.

P&G Chairman and CEO A.G. Lafley said in a statement from the company that during the quarter, nearly every currency in the world lost value compared with the U.S. dollar, with the Russian ruble "leading the way."

A stronger dollar can hurt companies that do a large share of their business overseas because sales in other countries translate back into fewer dollars. Health care products maker Johnson & Johnson and drug-maker Pfizer Inc. also recently reported a hit from foreign exchange rates.

P&G Chief Financial Officer Jon Moeller said that the company will offset the foreign exchange impact by reducing costs, shifting sourcing and raising prices. The projected impact on fiscal 2015 earnings is now double what the company anticipated in the last quarter and five times what it expected heading into fiscal 2015, spokesman Paul Fox said.

In the quarter that ended Dec. 31, P&G earned \$2.37 billion, or 82 cents per share. That compares with earnings of \$3.43 billion, or \$1.18 per share, the previous year.

Earnings, adjusted to account for discontinued operations and non-recurring costs, were \$1.22 per share. Revenue fell more than 4 percent to \$20.16 billion. □

## Stocks tumble on company outlooks, durables

**ALEX VEIGA**  
**AP Business Writer**

U.S. stocks slumped Tuesday after some of the market's largest companies reported disappointing earnings, taking investors on a turbulent ride that deepened the losses for the year.

The companies that rattled the market included Microsoft, Caterpillar and Procter & Gamble. Some also forecast weaker results in months ahead.

An unexpected drop in U.S. orders of long-lasting goods also weighed on investors, briefly dragging the Dow Jones industrial average down 390 points early in the day before it pared back some of the losses. It was the biggest one-day decline for the blue-chip index since Jan. 5.

The downbeat company report cards raise concerns about corporate America's ability to grow profits at a time when many investors are expecting the resurgent U.S. economy to drive earnings should economic growth weaken overseas.

"That theme, 'Boy, this is the year earnings are going to come back,' suffered a little bit of a setback," said Sean Lynch, co-head of global equity strategy at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "Investors are starting to worry that the stronger dollar and some the impacts of energy aren't always positive."

The Dow dropped 291.49 points, or 1.7 percent, to close at 17,387.21. It is now 3.7 percent below its record high of 18,053.71 on

Dec. 26.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 27.53 points, or 1.3 percent, to 2,029.56. It's down 2.9 percent from its high of 2,090.57 on Dec. 29. The Nasdaq composite dropped 90.27 points, or 1.9 percent, to 4,681.50.

The major stock indexes got off to a rough start early on, each opening sharply lower as investors digested the company earnings news. A

among stocks in the S&P, sliding \$4.35, or 9.3 percent, to \$42.66. Caterpillar wasn't far behind, shedding \$6.18, or 7.2 percent, to \$79.85.

Utility stocks, where investors go when they're looking for safety, were the only industry group to rise. Stocks have wavered since the start of the year on signs that growth outside of the U.S. is slowing.

companies delivering their latest financial results Tuesday.

Caterpillar, Packaging Corp. of America, J&J Snack Foods and mining company Freeport-McMoRan each reported earnings that fell short of Wall Street forecasts.

Even companies that boasted strong quarterly results, such as American Airlines Group, which re-



**Traders Gerard Farco, left, and Gregory Rowe work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2015. U.S. stocks tumbled in trading Tuesday, weighed down by disappointing forecasts from big-name companies and an unexpected drop in orders of long-lasting goods.**

**(AP Photo/Richard Drew)**

report showing that sales of new U.S. homes accelerated 11.6 percent last month failed to veer the market from its slide.

By midmorning, the Dow had flirted with a drop of nearly 400 points. The market began to pare its losses around midday.

Nine of the 10 sectors in the S&P 500 fell, with technology stocks dropping the most. Microsoft, which reported quarterly results late Monday, led the decline

December's 3.4 percent drop in durable goods orders came about as demand for commercial aircraft declined. It suggests that U.S. companies may be growing wary of economic weakness in Europe and Asia, as well as the strengthening dollar, which can hurt American exports. Traders remain focused on corporate earnings, which are a key driver of stocks. But there were few bright spots among several of the

corded record quarterly profit, also delivered cautionary notes. The airline said a key revenue figure would decline in the next quarter. Weakening currencies versus the dollar was a recurrent theme, with Procter & Gamble and Microsoft each citing the stronger dollar as reason for weaker results in months ahead. Caterpillar, Packaging Corp. and Pfizer also issued weak earnings or revenue outlooks. □



## Much Too Responsible



PAUL KRUGMAN  
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The United States and Europe have a lot in common. Both are multicultural and democratic; both are immensely wealthy; both possess currencies with global reach. Both, unfortunately, experienced giant housing and credit bubbles between 2000 and 2007, and suffered painful slumps when the bubbles burst.

Since then, however, policy on the two sides of the Atlantic has diverged. In one great economy, officials have shown a stern commitment to fiscal and monetary virtue, making strenuous efforts to balance budgets while remaining vigilant against inflation. In the other, not so much.

And the difference in attitudes is the main reason the two economies are now on such different paths. Spend-thrift, loose-money America is experiencing a solid recovery - a reality reflected in President Barack Obama's feisty State of the Union address. Meanwhile, virtuous Europe is sinking ever deeper into deflationary quicksand; everyone hopes that the new monetary measures announced Thursday will break the downward spiral, but nobody I know really expects them to be enough.

On the U.S. economy: No, it's not morning in America, let alone the kind of prosperity we managed during the Clinton years. Recovery could and should have come much faster, and family incomes remain well below their precrisis level. Although you'd never know it from the public discussion, there's overwhelming agreement among economists that the Obama stimulus of 2009-10 helped limit the damage from the financial crisis, but it was too small and faded away far too fast. Still, when you compare the performance of the U.S. economy over the past two years with all those Republican predictions of doom, you can see why Obama is strutting a bit.

Europe, on the other hand - or more precisely the eurozone, the 18 countries sharing a common currency - did almost everything wrong. On the fiscal side, Europe never did much stimulus, and quickly turned to austerity - spending cuts and, to a lesser extent, tax increases - despite high unemployment. On the monetary side, officials fought the imaginary menace of inflation, and took years to acknowledge that the real

threat is deflation.

Why did they get it so wrong?

To some extent, the turn toward austerity reflected institutional weakness: In the United States, federal programs like Social Security, Medicare and food stamps helped support states like Florida with especially severe housing busts, whereas European nations in similar straits, like Spain, were on their own. But European austerity also reflected willful misdiagnosis of the situation. In Europe as in America, the excesses that led to crisis overwhelmingly involved private rather than public debt, with Greece very much an outlier. But officials in Berlin and Brussels chose to ignore the evidence in favor of a narrative that placed all the blame on budget deficits, and simultaneously rejected the evidence suggesting - correctly - that trying to slash deficits in a depressed economy would deepen the depression.

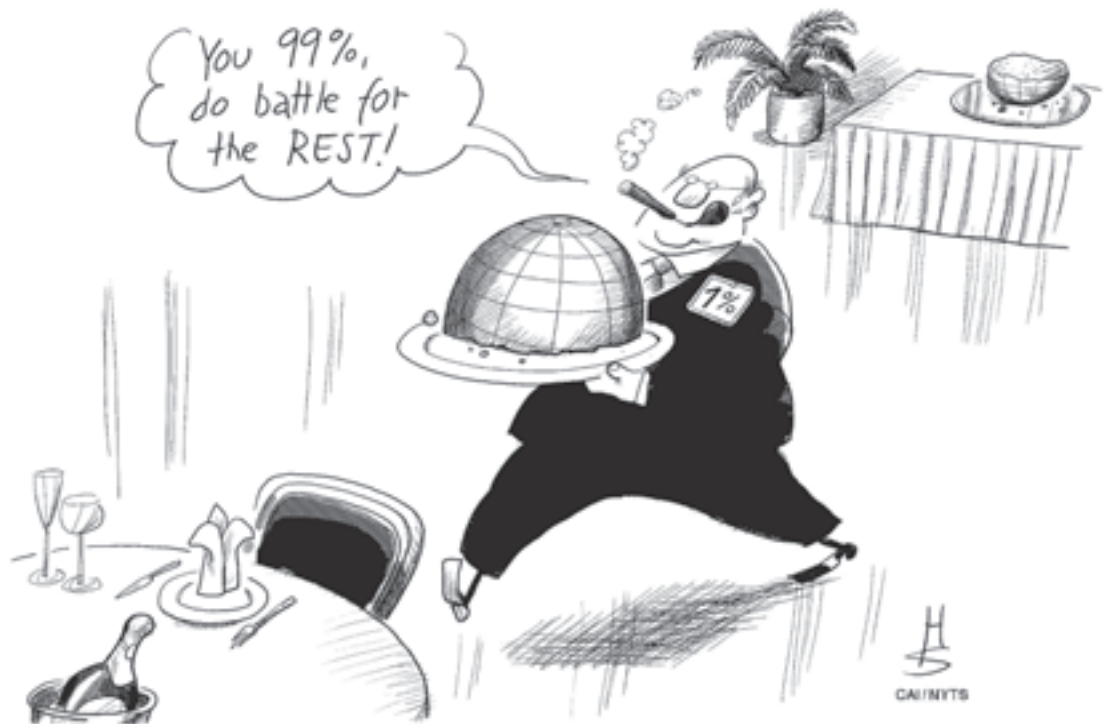
Meanwhile, Europe's central bankers decided to worry about inflation in 2011 and raise interest rates. Even at the time it was obvious that this was foolish - yes, there had been an uptick in headline inflation, but measures of underlying inflation were too low, not too high.

Monetary policy got much better after Mario Draghi became president of the European Central Bank in late 2011. Indeed, Draghi's heroic efforts to provide liquidity to nations facing speculative attack almost surely saved the euro from collapse. But it's not at all clear that he has the tools to fight off the broader deflationary forces set in motion by years of wrongheaded policy. Furthermore, he has to function with one hand tied behind his back, because Germany remains adamantly opposed to anything that might make life easier for debtor nations.

The terrible thing is that Europe's economy was wrecked in the name of responsibility. True, there have been times when being tough meant reducing deficits and resisting the temptation to print money. In a depressed economy, however, a balanced-budget fetish and a hard-money obsession are deeply irresponsible. Not only do they hurt the economy in the short run, they can - and in Europe, have - inflict long-run harm, damaging the economy's potential and driving it into a deflationary trap that's very hard to escape.

Nor was this an innocent mistake. The thing that strikes me about Europe's archons of austerity, its doyens of deflation, is their self-indulgence. They felt comfortable, emotionally and politically, demanding sacrifice (from other people) at a time when the world needed more spending. They were all too eager to ignore the evidence that they were wrong.

And Europe will be paying the price for their self-indulgence for years, perhaps decades, to come. □



## Dataclism And The Devotion Leap



DAVID BROOKS  
© 2015 New York Times

The online dating site OkCupid asks its clients to rate each other's attractiveness on a scale of 1 to 5. When men rated the women, the median score was about 3 and the ratings followed a bell curve - a few really attractive women and an equal number of women rated as unattractive.

But when women rated men, the results were quite different. The median score was between 1 and 2. Only 1 in 6 of the guys was rated as having above average looks. Either the guys who go to places like OkCupid, Tinder and other sites are disproportionately homely, or women have unforgiving eyes.

Looks, unsurprisingly, dominate online dating. But I learned some details from "Dataclism," the book by Christian Rudder, who is the co-founder and president of OkCupid.

There's a gigantic superstar effect. Women who are super attractive get a vast majority of the approaches. The bottom 95 percent get much less. For men, looks barely matter at all unless you are in the top 3 percent or so. The hunks get barged with approaches.

It's better to have a polarizing profile than a bland one. People who generate high levels of disapproval - because they look like goths or bikers or just weird - often also generate

higher levels of enthusiasm.

Racial bias is prevalent. When Asian men are looking at Asian women they rate them as 18 percent more attractive than average. But when they are looking at black women, they rate them as 27 percent less attractive. White and Latino men downgrade black women by nearly the same percentage. White, Latino and Asian women have similar preferences.

When people start texting or tweeting to each other, they don't turn into a bunch of Einsteins. Rudder looked into the most common words and phrases used on Twitter. For men they include: good bro, ps4, my beard, in nba, hoopin and off-season. For women they include: my nails done, mani pedi, retail therapy, and my belly button.

People who date online are not shallower or vainer than those who don't. Research suggests they are broadly representative. It's just that they're in a specific mental state. They're shopping for human beings, commodifying people. They have access to very little information that can help them judge if they will fall in love with this person. They pay ridiculous amounts of attention to things like looks, which have little bearing on whether a relationship will work. OkCupid took down the pictures one day. The people who interacted on this day exchanged contact info at twice the rate as on a regular day.

The dating sites have taken the information available online and tried to use it to match up specific individuals. They've failed. An exhaustive review of the literature by Eli J. Finkel of Northwestern and others concluded, "No compelling evidence supports matching sites' claims that mathematical algorithms work." That's because what creates a relationship can't be expressed in data or photographs. Being in love can't be done by a person in a self-oriented mindset,

asking: Does this choice serve me? Online dating is fascinating because it is more or less the opposite of its object: love. When online daters actually meet, an entirely different mindset has to kick in. If they're going to be open to a real relationship, they have to stop asking where this person rates in comparison to others and start asking, can we lower the boundaries between self and self. They have to stop thinking in individual terms and start feeling in rapport terms.

Basically, they have to take the enchantment leap. This is when something dry and utilitarian erupts into something passionate, inescapable and devotional. Sometimes a student becomes enraptured by the beauty of math, and becomes a mathematician. Soldiers doing the drudgery of boot camp are gradually bonded into a passionate unit, for which they will risk their lives. Anybody who has started a mere job and found in it a vocation has taken the enchantment leap.

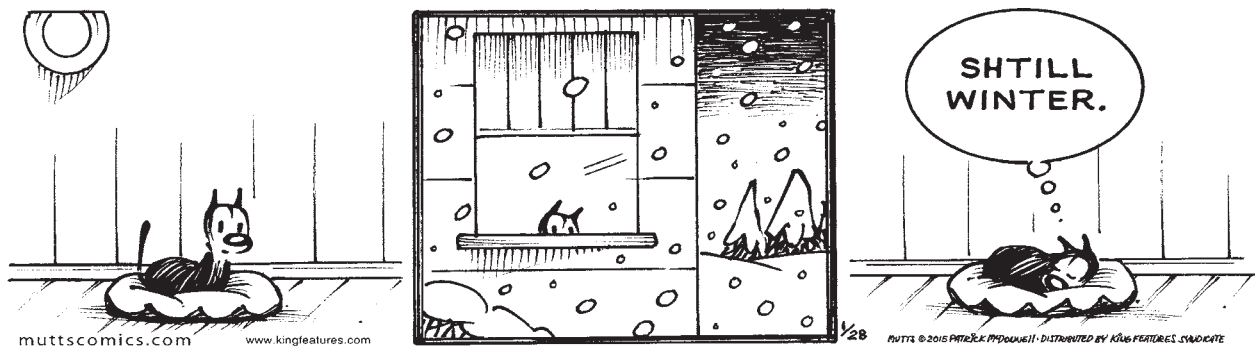
In love, of course, the shift starts with vulnerability, not calculation. The people involved move from selfishness to service, from prudent thinking to poetic thinking, from a state of selection to a state of need, from relying on conscious thinking to relying on their own brilliant emotions.

When you look at all the people looking for love and vocation today, you realize we live in a culture and an online world that encourages a very different mind-set; in a technical culture in which humanism, religion and the humanities, which are the great instructors of enchantment, are not automatically central to life.

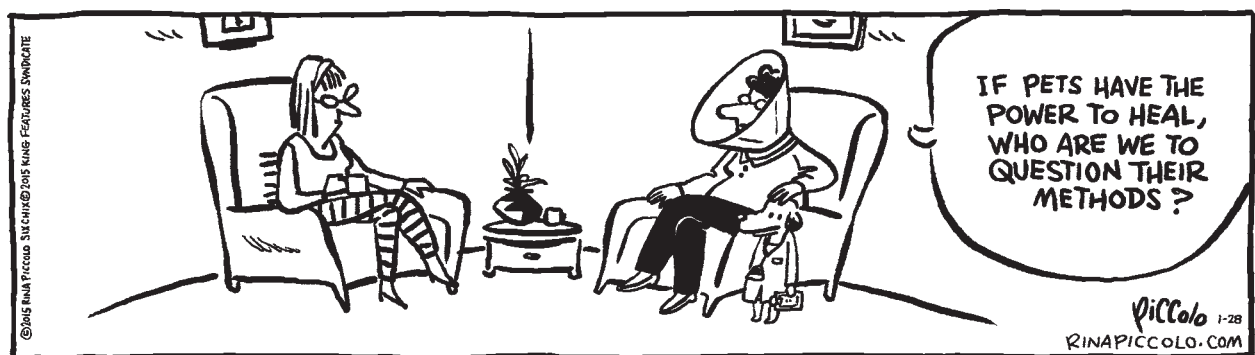
I have to guess some cultures are more fertile for enchantment - that some activities, like novel-reading or music-making, cultivate a skill for it, and that building a capacity for enchantment is, these days, a countercultural act and a practical and fervent need. □



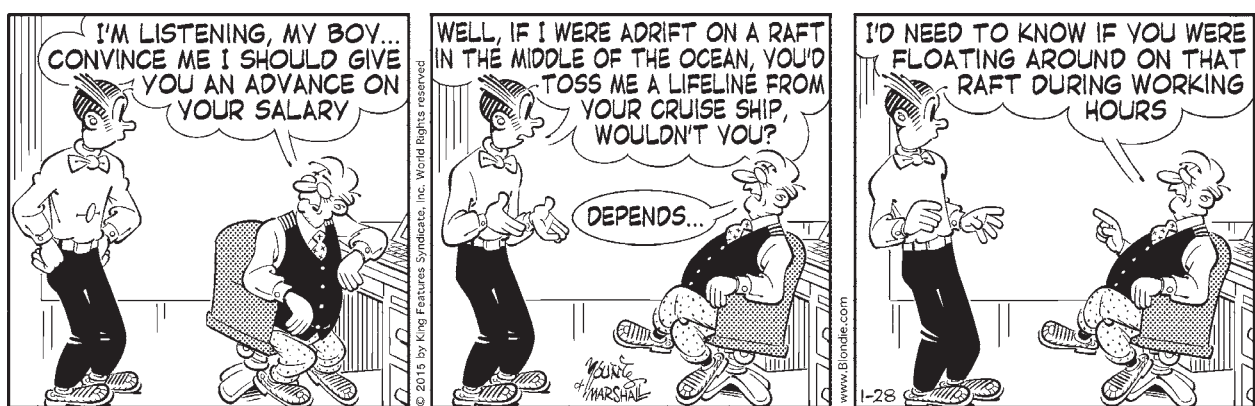
## Mutts



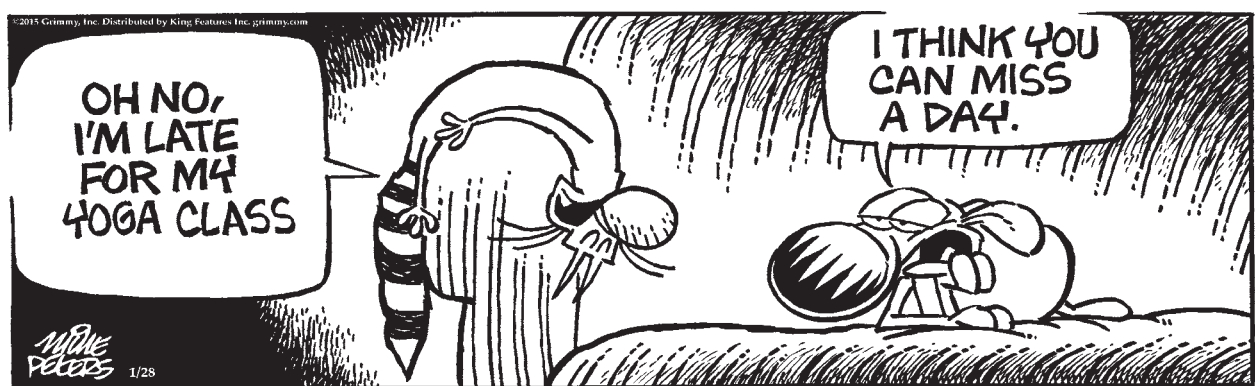
## 6 Chix



## Blondie



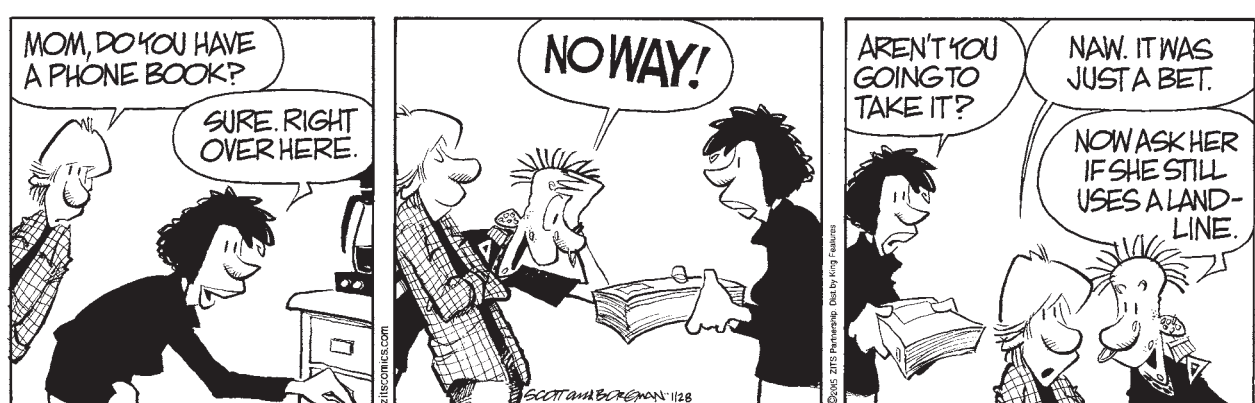
## Mother Goose & Grimm



## Baby Blues



## Zits



## Conceptis Sudoku

		2	1	5	7			
			4			6		
5		3					7	
2	1				8			5
	7						3	
3	5	4						8
8	4		7				2	
9				8	5	4		
			3	1				

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

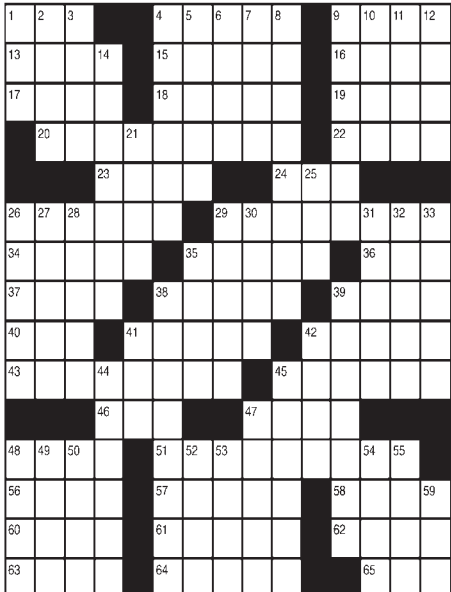
3	6	5	8	7	1	2	9	4
2	1	4	5	9	6	3	8	7
9	8	7	2	3	4	5	1	6
1	2	9	7	5	3	6	4	8
4	3	6	9	1	8	7	5	2
7	5	8	6	4	2	9	3	1
8	9	3	1	2	7	4	6	5
5	7	1	4	6	9	8	2	3
6	4	2	3	8	5	1	7	9

## ACROSS

- A, \_\_, E, F, G...
- Cracker spreads
- Farm harvest
- "Break \_\_!"; well-wisher's cry to an actor
- Know-\_\_; smarty-pants
- Sixty minutes
- Close at hand
- Punctuation mark
- Additionally
- Candor
- \_\_ fire to; ignites
- Mah-jongg piece
- Rush
- Bowler's delight
- Big parties
- Huge lifting machine
- Stinky animal
- Religious sister
- Ladder step
- Human \_\_; person
- Bug that jumps
- Play division
- Rings out
- Small flat liquor bottle
- Soldier's dining room
- Dawdle in a bookstore
- Lung contents
- Swerve
- Q-tip, for one
- Buenos Aires' nation
- Loathe
- Facial hair
- Cries
- Smell
- T-shirt size
- Story
- \_\_ over; spills
- Glowing coal fragment
- Chop down

## DOWN

- Embargo
- Treble \_\_; musical symbol
- Precious
- Dill, for one
- Make amends
- Not wild
- Lawn trees
- Making deep wide cuts
- Ran after
- Actor's part
- Remove from power forcefully
- Experts
- Shredding cheese
- Athletic shoe brand
- Printer fluid
- "Get lost!"
- Cease-fire
- Angry speeches
- Ability; expertise
- Attila's men
- Relative by marriage
- Reckon
- Rattler or boa



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 1/28/15

## Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

SLOW	WHACK	ELMS
HYPE	HUMAN	FAIL
AMES	AGILE	FINE
MENTORS	LABORED	
ELF	CEDAR	
SHARD	CAR	STAYS
YARN	BAR	MISFIT
RUM	FATEFUL	TEA
UTOPIA	FED	FELL
PERIL	PUB	HORDE
	LEGAL	HER
OPPOSES	SANTAFE	
WRIT	ATALL	UPON
LONG	REGAL	NERD
SPED	SLOPE	EXES

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- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 35 Official stamp    | 48 Injection      |
| 38 Tolerable         | 49 Usually dry    |
| 39 Bouquet seller    | streambed         |
| 41 Fraternity letter | 50 Sitting upon   |
| 42 Worry             | 52 Enlarge a hole |
| 44 Cavalry swords    | 53 Clothing       |
| 45 Fender __;        | 54 Actor Wyle     |
| minor accident       | 55 Competent      |
| 47 Brink; threshold  | 59 Stitch         |



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24/7

## Monarch butterflies rebound in Mexico, numbers still low

**MARK STEVENSON**  
**Associated Press**

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** —

The number of Monarch butterflies that reached wintering grounds in Mexico has rebounded 69 percent from last year's lowest-on-record levels, but their numbers remain very low, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

Last year, the Monarchs covered only 1.65 acres (0.67 hectares), the smallest area since record-keeping began in 1993.

This year, the butterflies rebounded, to cover 2.79 acres (1.13 hectares), according to a formal census by Mexican environmental authorities and scientists released Tuesday.

The orange-and-black butterflies are suffering from loss of milkweed habitat in the United States, illegal logging in Mexico and climate change. Each year, the butterflies make a mi-



In this Jan. 4, 2015 file photo, Monarch butterflies perch on a twig at the Piedra Herrada sanctuary, near Valle del Bravo, Mexico.

**Associated Press**

gration from Canada to Mexico and find the same pine and fir forests to spend the winter, even though no butterfly lives to make the round trip.

"Of course it is good news that the forest area occupied by Monarchs

this season increased," said Omar Vidal, head of the World Wildlife Fund in Mexico. "But let's be crystal clear, 1.13 hectares is very, very low, and it is still the second-smallest forest surface occupied by this butterfly in 22 years of monitoring."

At their peak in 1996, the Monarchs covered more than 44.5 acres (18 hectares) in the mountains west of Mexico City.

Lincoln Brower, a leading entomologist at Sweet Briar College in Virginia, has said that with anything below 2 hectares (4.1 acres), "they will remain in the danger category and I will continue to be concerned. "A population covering 4 or 5 hectares (9 to 12 acres) would be a sign of significant recovery, he added.

The butterfly population

has plummeted before, and then partially recovered.

In 2001, driving rain and bitter cold killed millions, leading scientists to speculate that migrating populations would be seriously depleted in 2002. To their surprise, twice as many returned as some had predicted. In 2004, unfavorable weather, pollution and deforestation caused a drastic decline in the population, but the next year, the butterflies bounced back.

But the overall tendency since 1993 points to a steep, progressive decline. Each time the Monarchs rebound, they do so at lower levels. The species is found in many countries and is not in danger of extinction, but experts fear the migration could be disrupted if very few butterflies make the trip.

The temperate climate of the mountains west of Mexico City normally creates an ideal setting for the Monarchs. Every fall, tens of millions of the delicate creatures fly thousands of miles to their ancestral breeding grounds, creating clouds of butterflies. They clump together on trees, forming chandelier shapes of orange and black.

The migration is an inherited trait: No butterfly lives to make the full round trip, and it is unclear how they find the route back to the same patch of forest each year. Some scientists suggest the butterflies may release chemicals marking the migratory path and fear that if their numbers fall too low, the chemical traces will not be strong enough for others to follow.

Extreme cold and drought also hurt butterfly populations, and in Mexico, illegal logging can punch holes in the forest canopy that shelters them, creating a situation in which cold rainfall could kill millions. Vidal said Mexico has been able to essentially stop illegal logging in the Monarch protected reserve, but he said habitat loss in the United States remains a huge problem. Milkweed, the butterflies' main source of food has been crowded out by pesticide-resistant crops.

"The question we should all be asking now" is whether the U.S. can halt the loss of milkweed habitat, he said. □

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# Sundance Watch: Redford brings film to his own festival

RYAN PEARSON

AP Entertainment Writer

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) —

Robert Redford took "A Walk in the Woods" to his own Sundance Film Festival.

The 78-year-old actor, director and producer had long hoped to adapt Bill Bryson's 1998 travel book about two friends hiking the Appalachian Trail. It finally came together last year, and director Ken Kwapis submitted it to the festival director without Redford's knowledge.

And that's how Redford ended up making the rounds to media outlets at the festival that he helped launch more than 30 years ago.

"The circumstances, maybe you can call them weird, but I just call them serendipitous. It's just one of those things that came together. It does feel strange with Bill Bryson sitting next to me. That's a little strange. We were sitting in the screen-

ing last night. I found myself nervous that he was sitting next to me and I was playing him," Redford said.

Redford said he'd originally hoped to re-team with Paul Newman to make "A Walk in the Woods." But after Newman died in 2008, the project floundered.

"I read the book many, many years ago and I found myself laughing out loud and I don't do that. And that made me pay attention to the book on the whole and I thought this is a project I think I can be in as an actor, as a character. And initially I thought of Paul Newman because that was way back. I thought that it would be a wonderful third part for Paul and I to do, because it had similar personalities the other two had," Redford said. "Then it became a matter of perseverance, passion and obstinacy. I wasn't going to give it up because it was not coming together the way I had hoped. And

then finally it has come together and here we are."

Nick Nolte eventually was cast to fill the part of Katz, the friend that accompanies Bryson on his walk. The two actors shifted the focus of the film from rediscovering America to also pondering their own mortality.

"I was thinking about a journey that was being taken by two people who were once friends who fell out and were going to come back together again through some kind of desperation. Last chance cafe or last chance before it's too late or before you're going to die — all that I thought was pretty powerful emotional stuff as a motive," Redford said.

The 73-year-old Nolte said the two take slightly differ-



In this Friday, Jan. 23, 2015 file photo, Robert Redford attends the premiere of "A Walk In The Woods" during the 2015 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

Associated Press

ent approaches personally to aging — but he was glad to make a friend through the film.

"This I like because I've only got death left, you know. And that's all Bob has. Of course, he denies that but you know — that's the big event. I do have a 7-year-old daughter so that's

been a blessing. It sparks you alive, it really does," Nolte said. "Bob has been a good addition as far as friends in my life. Not only as an actor but as a friend." "A Walk in the Woods" does not yet have a US distributor. The Sundance Film Festival continues through next weekend.

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Owner Benjamin Petrocchi



# Kevin Spacey skips award shows to help aspiring Arab actors

**AYA BATRAWY**

**Associated Press**

**SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates (AP)** — Kevin Spacey

skipped the Screen Actors Guild awards, which handed him a win for his wildly popular role on "House of Cards", to watch 34 young actors from across the Arab world perform a play as part of his foundation's Home Grown initiative supporting local talent.

The cast, all 25 years old or younger, hail from war-torn Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq and other corners of the Middle East. For many of them, the play marked the first time they had ever left their home countries or been given support to hone their craft.

Abduljabbar al-Suhili, 25, from Sanaa, Yemen, is returning from the intensive workshops held in the United Arab Emirates to a country without a president. Yemen has been plagued by power outages, al-Qaida attacks, rebel Houthi advances and widespread political instability. Dabbling in the arts is considered a luxury, and acting is not seen as a serious profession, he says.

"The state bodies are pre-occupied with the constitution, the transitional phase



In this Jan. 25, 2015 photo made available by Emirates News Agency, WAM, Sheik Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, right, meets with by Kevin Spacey in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

and security and stability because of the political situation there," he said. "This has impacted artists because we are unable to fulfill our ambitions in culture or artistic efforts on stage or in music. We have become concerned with earning a living."

But for two weeks, al-Suhili had a chance to escape that. He and the other aspiring actors were flown to the emirate of Sharjah in

the UAE in an all-expense-paid program with the non-profit Middle East Theatre Academy, a joint initiative launched in 2011 with the Kevin Spacey Foundation (KSF) and Emirati businessman Badr Jafar, whose family runs a Sharjah-based petroleum and gas conglomerate.

The actors were selected from a group of around 300 applicants for the first KSF Home Grown workshop to take place in the

Middle East, with two previous workshops in the United States and United Kingdom.

After two weeks of training with professional acting coaches from KSF, the actors performed a play titled "Dhow Under the Sun." The play is set in a fictional refugee camp where issues of poverty, corruption, love and hope form the narrative. With a two-night run, it premiered before an intimate gathering Sunday

that included the ruler of the emirate of Sharjah, Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al-Qasimi.

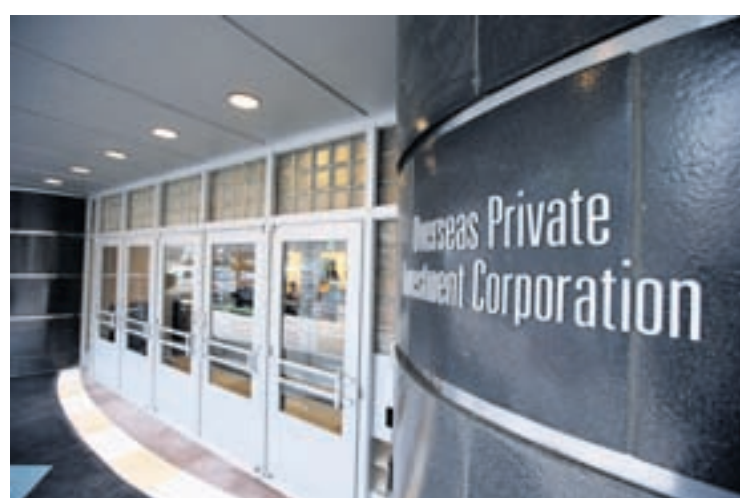
Before the opening night of the play, Spacey spent time coaching the young actors and gave them tips to take with them back home. When introducing the play, he told the audience that it was this kind of setting that helped him grow as an actor.

"Tonight is the kind of night that I grew up with, that I experienced very young because in my theater class I got to be part of many programs where I was brought together with other emerging artists, put on plays, did workshops," he said. "Tonight we celebrate ... bringing together these young remarkable talents from so many different places as well."

KSF Executive Director Steven Winter, who has worked with Spacey for 10 years, said the award-winning actor is "hugely passionate about using the creative industries to propel people forward."

"I think probably because he was a beneficiary of the sorts of programs that we run when he was a young person," Winter said.

**Associated Press**



In this Jan. 25, 2015 photo made available by Emirates News Agency, WAM, Sheik Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, right, meets with by Kevin Spacey in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

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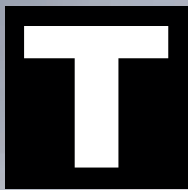
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